

Front Line *Dispatch*

October, 2003

Vol 1, Issue 1

Inside This Issue

In this issue we take a look at **Light Anti-Tank Weapons**. Check it out!

Assault Phase: The Bazooka in ASL
page 2

Panzerschrecks (PSK) In ASL
page 2

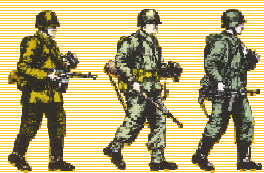
Light Anti-Tank Weapons in WWII
page 3

Panzerfaust? A Definite Maybe!
page 4

Here's your rifle, now go take out that tank!
page 5

Say ole chap, have you a PIAT?
Page 5

On the Range
An LATW Tutorial
page 6



Next Month's Issue

Front Line Dispatch will investigate **Snipers** in next month's issue.

Official Newsletter of the Poor Man's ASL Club



Panzers in action, France, 1940

Rally Phase

Welcome to **Front Line Dispatch**, an ASL newsletter designed and written to entertain and educate the ASL community. Each month, FLD will bring you articles discussing some aspect of the best war game out there, as well as the war which inspired it. Usually we will try to focus our efforts on one part of the game so that your understanding of the rules and the history behind them will be enhanced.

Take this month for example. The first issue deals with **Light Anti-Tank Weapons (LATW)**, the rules governing their use, the history of their development and use

on the battlefield and some of the differences that existed between the combatants. In subsequent months, expect to find articles dealing with **Snipers**, **Airborne** and even **Weather Effects**. We hope you'll be surprised by what you'll learn.

Hopefully, as time goes by, FLD will improve in both quality and content. New features will be added as resources become available. And like any good Newsletter, you will have the ability to write FLD and provide feedback. We may actually publish some of your responses!

Now, FLD is an extension of a small,

but burgeoning ASL group in New Market, Md. So, from time to time you may find some references to goings on. We understand, however, that you could care a less that Ed spilled his soda all over the game map. So we'll keep the local stuff to a minimum. It's the wider ASL community we're trying to reach.

We hope that you enjoy FLD and that it will enhance your experience with Advanced Squad Leader. And remember, "Keep rolling low!"

AL



Assault Phase – The Bazooka in ASL



Bazookas are effective weapons in ASL against AFV's and are liberally supplied in many scenarios. Proper use of them can be a means of leveling the field of play when lacking AFV's on your side.

The Bazooka (BAZ 13.4) is printed on half inch counters and is considered a support weapon (SW).



Consequently it can be carried and used by any unbroken Infantry MMC or any combination of two SMCs at a cost of 1PP. Leadership modifiers may be applied to modify its To Hit DR, but only if the leader is not the one using the weapon.

The development of the bazooka during WWII is represented on the counter by the number after the BAZ reference.

These numbers (43, 44 and 45) represent the year in which it was used on the battlefield. Observe these designations carefully as they impact the strength of the weapon.

Interestingly, Bazookas have their own To Hit Tables listed on the back of the counter. This table is used for armored and unarmored targets. Looking closely at them, you will observe that the firer must be dangerously close to the target to be effective. For instance, their maximum range is five hexes and you really need to be closer than that to have a good chance of hitting the target. In addition to that, all firer (C5) and Target (C6) Hit Determination DRM apply.

Once an AFV is hit, the attack is resolved on the C7.33 HEAT to Kill table. You would use either the BAZ 42 or BAZ 44+ column, depending on the time frame of the scenario.

Bazookas can also be used against Infantry as HEAT, but only if they are behind a wall or in a building/rubble/pillbox (C8.31). The attack against Infantry is resolved on the 8 column of the Infantry Fire Table (IFT)(C13.43).

Like all support weapons, the bazooka can malfunction. If the To Hit DR is > or = to its X# (printed on the counter), it is permanently removed from play.

"In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable."

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Panzerschrecks (PSK) in ASL

Panzerschrecks (PSK) are the German equivalent of the American Bazooka in ASL. Therefore all of the rules applying to the BAZ apply here as well with one main distinction. The PSK does not fire White Phosphorus (WP). It too has it's own To Hit Table printed on the back of the counter and has an IFT effect of 12 (C8.31). It resolves vehicular hits on the PSK column of the C7.33 Heat to Kill Table. It is only available from 1943 on.



Light Anti-Tank Weapons in World War II

Introduction...

When war broke out in 1939, no country was prepared to supply its infantrymen with adequate means of defending themselves against tanks. At the time, the Anti-Tank Rifle was the only available weapon and it was far from perfect. It usually had long barrels, fired single rounds only and could penetrate about 25mm of armor. The ammunition was solid and was designed to propel weight against the armor at sufficient speed to penetrate it. This became obsolete as tanks with heavier armor were produced.

Help is on the way...

Prior to the war, America developed a grenade that could pierce 100mm of armor. However, it had to be placed directly on the target, so it was not that useful. Then, a Col. Skinner thought of placing one of these grenades on the front of an experimental rocket launcher. It worked and the first LATW of its kind was born.

In late 1942, the M1A1 Rocket Launcher was introduced. It was a

4ft tube from which 60mm rocket grenades would be launched. It was dubbed the **"bazooka"** due to its resemblance to the musical instrument of similar shape. It was later supplemented by the M9 and M9A1. They were longer, heavier but able to penetrate about 120mm of armor. The effective range of these weapons was about 300m for soft targets and 100m for hard ones. The playing field was leveled a bit, but taking out a Panzer was still a very dangerous game.

Two can play that game...

The Germans, while producing some of the best tanks around, were surprisingly deficient in anti-tank warfare on this level. That is until 1943 when they got their hands on a bazooka. How this happened is open to debate, but many point to either captured weapons in North Africa or the interception of a shipment to Russia. In any case, they got one and developed it for their own purposes.

To increase capacity and range, the caliber was increased from the bazooka's 6mm to 8.8mm. The effective range, although in debate, was generally found to be 100-230m for moving targets and up to 400m for static ones.¹

The Germans generally produced two different models of LATW. The first was the **Panzerfaust** (meaning 'armored fist'). Rather than being fired from a rifle muzzle, the grenade had its own disposable launch tube. Therefore it was a single-shot weapon. Like all of its counterparts, it had a serious backblast area of about 6-10 feet.

The second model was the **Panzerschreck** (or "tank terror"). Deadlier than its counterpart in America, its maximum effective range was said to be 120 to 150m. It was reusable and almost identical in shape to the bazooka. All told, WWII saw major developments in the use and deployment of Light Anti-Tank Weapons. The Bazooka, Panzerfaust and Panzerschreck served as forerunners to today's LATW, staples of the modern-day battlefield.



"All told, WWII saw major developments in the use and deployment of Light Anti-Tank Weapons. The Bazooka, Panzerfaust and Panzerschreck served as forerunners to today's LATW, staples of the modern-day battlefield."



“What counts is not necessarily the size of the dog in the fight - it's the size of the fight in the dog.”

Dwight D. Eisenhower



“We succeed only as we identify in life, or in war, or in anything else, a single overriding objective, and make all other considerations bend to that one objective.”

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Panzerfaust ? A Definite Maybe !

The *Panzerfaust* is an interesting character in ASL as it is only a potential weapon for German Squads. Why only potential? Let's take a look.

First, only German Squads involved in scenarios after September 1943 have the opportunity of using this weapon. Therefore it has no representative counter. Reflecting the actual timing of development and use of the LATW in Germany, it is not available in earlier scenarios.

Second, only all good order German Infantry can attempt a PF Check. They do so by making a dr. If the dr is 1-3, the unit has a PF and the opportunity to use it. Roll > or =4 and the unit may have one, but cannot use it at that time. Roll an original 6 the unit has no PF and is now pinned. If already pinned, it now is broken.

Third, squads can only make a PF Check as long as it has not fired

its inherent FP. The PF Check dr can only occur during a friendly fire phase. And even if it fails, it counts as SW usage (A7.35).

Development of the PF historically is reflected several ways in ASL. It is represented by the PF dr modifiers. Aug-Sept 1943 gets you a +1 drm, 0 drm from Oct 43 to Dec 44, and a -1 drm for any scenario in 1945. (There are other DRM so make sure to check rule C13.31.)

Historical development is also reflected in the range allowed. Prior to June '44, the PF has a range of 1. Two hexes are allowed after that until Dec '44. Three hexes are permitted after that.

Since there is no counter, the basic TH# (10) of a PF/PFk attack is modified by a -2 for each hex of range to target. So if you are 3 hexes away (it's post Dec '44) the modified TH# is 4. Other TH DRM also apply.

Increase in production numbers during the war is also taken into consideration. Up to 1944 only 1 PF shot per German squad is allowed. 1 ½ shots can be taken in 1944 and 2 shots per squad in 1945.

The use of the weapon was not without risk. The range of the weapon in WWII improved from 30m initially up to 150m by war's end. This meant that the user had to be very close to the target to be effective. Any takers? ASL takes this danger into consideration as well by adding the risk of casualty reduction if the TH DR is 12 (11 or 12 for inexperienced Infantry – C13.36). Since it was a single shot weapon, breakdown and repair rules do not apply.

In the end, ASL incorporates the use of this tank-killer, but your opportunity of actually using it is never guaranteed, and always involves some risk.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

This month's quotes are those of Dwight D. Eisenhower. They are found on *The Quotations Page* at www.quotationspage.com.



Here's your rifle, now go take out that tank!

*Barbarossa...Kharkov...
Kursk...*

The names bring up images of tanks rolling across plains and fierce battles taking place on scales, which are impossible to grasp. Visions of men, in numbers never seen before hurling themselves at one another with death and destruction all around come to mind. You cannot think of the Eastern Front without these images. And certainly you cannot think of it without seeing the tanks, the many thousands of tanks engaged in battle.

But of all the images you would see, there is one that would be missing—the Russian Anti-Tank Rocket. Impossible, you say to yourself. Surely the Red Army, facing innumerable Panzers, would have, in their arsenal, a rocket-propelled weapon.? It was not to be.

Although the United States would lend some bazookas in 1943, the Soviet infantryman would have to stare down a



German Panzer with an Anti-tank Rifle. Russia's own research led them to reconsider earlier positions that the German armor was too thick to defeat by hand-held weapons. The result was the Russian anti-tank rifle.

One model produced was the PTRD-1941 anti-tank rifle. It was a single shot weapon, firing an armor piercing bullet. It weighed about 38 pounds and was just over 78 inches in length. It was designed and first fired in about a month's time.²

It's effectiveness against tanks is

up to some discussion. It was known to pierce the armor of many tanks, oftentimes without disabling them. In other situations it would not pierce the armor, but instead could be used against the tank's openings and soft spots as a means to delay the vehicle.

The weapon was not used exclusively against tanks. When opportunity permitted, it was also used against armored cars, personnel carriers, bunkers and other fortifications. Although not the weapon of choice, it did have some utility on the Eastern Front battlefield.

Say ole chap, have you a Piat?

The British PIAT, or Projector, Infantry, Anti-Tank device is also found in ASL. It was first available in 1943 after three years of development. It was also referred to as "The Boys," being named after a Captain with the same name (who incidentally died before the start of

the war). It fired a large caliber rifle round at high velocity.

In ASL, the Piat is a SW. It too has its own To Hit table printed on the back of the counter. Hits against armor are resolved on the PIAT column of the C7.33 Heat to Kill Table.

The PIAT has some

unique rules to be observed. It cannot be fired at a target 1 or more levels lower in the same or adjacent hex. It has a malfunction of B10 instead of an X#, is repaired by a dr of 1 or 2, and is removed with a dr of 6.

"Things are more like they are now than they ever were before."

Dwight D. Eisenhower



On the Range

A LATW Tutorial



"When you appeal to force, there's one thing you must never do - lose."

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Here is a brief review of the steps associated with combat involving LATW's.

- 1) Determine the range to target.
- 2) Using the correct To Hit Table (either back of counter or C3 To Hit Table), find the appropriate column to determine the Basic TH#.
- 3) Apply all target and firer TH Determination DRM applicable to LATW to arrive at the Modified TH#. These are found on the C3 To Hit Table (even if the

back of the counter is used for the weapon) and are marked with a red "L." (Note that in the AFPh, LATW are subject to a +2 To Hit DRM (Case C3). LATW never use area target type.

- 4) Leaders may apply their modifier to the To Hit DR. However, the Leader may not direct any more fires during that phase.
- 5) Once a hit is scored on a vehicular target, resolve it using the HEAT To Kill Table (C7.33). If the hit is

scored on personnel units, the appropriate IFT column is used [per weapon]. Note that personnel units may be attacked by LATW if they are behind a wall or in a building /rubble or pillbox. (C8.31)

- 5) [Check for backblast effects if the LATW is fired from a bld/rubble or pillbox.](#) C13.8

- 6) If the To Kill DR is successful (C7.33), use that DR to determine the extent of destruction to the AFV. This is found on table C7.7 AFV Destruction Table.

An Example and A Warning

Recently, two gents were playing a scenario which required the Americans to defend without any AFV's. Judicious use of the LATW's was required. The defender finally had a good shot, and

took it. The AFV was quickly turned into a burning wreck. Unfortunately the defender's glory was short-lived as he also activated the player's sniper. The sniper, in turn, took out the 10-2

leader for the defender and probably ended any chance for him to win. This was an excellent example of the use of LATW's. Unfortunately it also highlighted one of the dangers in using them.



Panzerfaust in hand.

From the Rulebook...

"A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both."

Dwight D. Eisenhower

13. Light Anti-Tank Weapons (LATW)
13.1. LATW: The term LATW includes all ordinance weapons represented by SW-size counters whose main use is against armor. LATW include ATR, ATMM, Bazooka, PIAT, PF/PK,

and PSK. All LATW ordinance must first secure a hit vs armor on the appropriate To Hit Table (C3) before resolving that hit on the applicable To Kill Table. All Firer and Target Hit Determination DRM applicable to LATW are listed on the To Hit Table and

marked with a red "L." However, all LATW firing during the AFPh [EXC: Opportunity Fire] are subject to a +2 To Hit DRM (Case C3). LATW may never use the Area Target Type.



Front Line Dispatch

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Front Line Dispatch is a production of the Poor Man's ASL Club, located in New Market, MD

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The Poor Man's ASL Club

The Poor Man's ASL Club meets one evening a month in New Market, MD. We are trying to provide an opportunity for those who enjoy ASL, but are not able to play on weekends. If you are interested in joining us, drop us a line at pmaslclub@yahoo.com.

For more information on the club, ASL and

World War II history, visit our website at

www.advancedsquadleaderresource.com

It's still a work in progress and contains non-ASL info that you may or may not be interested in at this time.

DC Conscripts

Another great group in the DC/Balto/North Va. Area is the DC Conscripts. It also has monthly meetings and is filled with some of the most knowledgeable players around. For more information, visit their website at

www.dconscripts.org

Final Fire Phase

If you'd like to respond to something you saw in Front Line Dispatch, then drop us a line at

frontlinedispatch@yahoo.com

Who knows, we may even publish your letter. But keep it short!

We reserve the right to publish and edit letters due to space considerations. We also reserve the right to comment on what was written. So, in the end, we always have the "final fire.!"



About Our Organization...

Front Line Dispatch is a monthly newsletter designed to increase the enjoyment of Advanced Squad Leader and the discussion of World War II history. It flows from a local ASL club in New Market, Md, which meets once a month. Front Line Dispatch is not affiliated with Multi-Man Publishing, but wholly supports it

Endnotes:

1. <http://www.geocities.com/Augusta/8172/panzerfaust.htm>
2. The PTRD & PTRS Anti-Tank Rifles by Chuck Madurski <http://www.smallarmsreview.com/pdf/antitank.pdf>

Front Line Dispatch seeks to enhance the enjoyment of the discussion of history and the use of Advanced Squad Leader. In no way do the articles or images used, reflect agreement with the ideas that brought about World War II.

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